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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
ACDA-12 MCT-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-13 /095 W
----------087298 070608Z /14
R 061653Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 571
INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2670

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS: OAS, PBOR, HO, ES
SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR/HONDURAS MILITARY OBSERVERS

REF: (A) STATE 139232, (B) TEGUCIGALPA 2654

1. BORDER CONDITIONS: EMBASSY AWARE OF NO MAJOR CHANGES IN BORDER CONDITIONS. BORDER HAS BEEN QUIET AND EMBASSY UNDER IMPRESSION THAT COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION HAS IMPROVED SINCE LAST INCIDENT IN MID-NOVEMBER. EMBASSY AGREWS OAS INTERMEDIARY ROLE IS CRUCIAL TO PRESERVING THIS FAVORABLE SITUATION. IT SEEMS TO US UNLIKELY THAT CHANGE IN SALVADOR'S FOREIGN MINISTER IN ITSELF WOULD CAUSE DISSIPATION OF GOOD FEELING AS DESCRIBED. ON THE CONTRARY, GOH OFFICIALS HAVE GENERALLY EXPRESSED PLEASURE AT RODRIGUEZ PORTH'S ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE, VIEWING HIM AS MORE CAPABLE THAN EX-FONMIN MARTINEZ. DETERIORATION IN EXPECTATIONS MAY BE DUE TO DISCOVERY AT GUATEMALA AND MIAMI MEETINGS IN APRIL THAT BORDER DELINEATION WAS TO BE MORE DIFFICULT THAN ORIGINALLY HOPED.

2. SERIOUSNESS OF TERRORIST THREAT: EMBASSY PREVIOUSLY UNAWARE, AND HAS NO INFORMATION ON POSSIBILITY TERRORISTS OR GUERILLAS MAY BE OPERATING IN BORDER AREAS. THERE IS NO KNOWN TERRORIST THREAT TO OAS
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OBSERVERS IN TEGUCIGALPA.

3. NEED FOR CONTINUING OBSERVERS BEYOND JULY 15: EMBASSY BELIEVES STRONGLY THAT OAS OBSERVERS PERFORM AN ESSENTIAL ROLE (SEE 77 TEGUCIGALPA 5882 AND 77 STATE 303632). THIS WAS EVIDENT DURING 1976 INCIDENTS THAT LED TO ESTABLISHMENT OF OAS TEAM AND DURING LAST INCIDENT. GIVEN INTERNAL

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SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR, AND EXPECTATIONS THAT
NEGOTIATIONS NOW SEEN UNLIKELY TO PROVIDE A SOLUTION FOR SOME TIME,
EMBASSY BELIEVES CONTINUANCE OF OAS TEAM EVEN MORE IMPERATIVE.

4. LENGTH OF TOURS: CURRENT 90-DAY ASSIGNMENTS ARE TOO SHORT
(SEE TEGUCIGALPA 5396) AND EMBASSY ENDORSES ANY POSSIBILITY OF
EXTENDING TOURS (SEE USCINCSO DTG 142030Z NOV 77).
ONE DIFFICULTY NOTED BY GOH IN EXTENDING TOURS, HOWEVER,
IS APPARENT REQUIREMENT THAT OAS REIMBURSEMENTS BE MADE IN
ADVANCE. EMBASSY BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT IN PRINCIPLE GOH
WOULD SUPPORT LONGER TOURS.

5. EQUAL TREATMENT FOR OBSERVERS: EMBASSY BELIEVES OAS SHOULD
APPROACH GOH DIRECTLY ON THIS MATTER, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF
COL. AGUDELO'S HAVING ALREADY BROAHCED ISSUE WITH CHIEF OF STATE,
GENERAL MELGAR. ONCE SUCH APPROACH MADE, EMBASSY CAN DISCUSS
AS APPROPRIATE WITH FONMIN AND MILITARY OFFICIALS.

6. COMMENT: LIMA NEGOTIATIONS ARE TAKING PLACE UNDER AUSPICES
OF OAS AND 13TH MFM, AND EMBASSY WONDERS IF NOW MAY NOT BE
APPROPRIATE TIME FOR CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN TO SUGGESTION THAT
OAS SECGEN INDICATE RENEWED INTEREST IN CONTINUING MOMENTUM TOWARDS
RESOLUTION.
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